

Message Text

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PAGE 01 OUAGAD 02723 210838Z

ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 AGRE-00 AID-05 EB-07 COME-00

CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 IO-13 HEW-04 DHA-02 PA-01

PRS-01 USIA-06 DODE-00 /069 W

-----012493 211108Z /20

R 210744Z JUL 77

FM AMEMBASSY OUAGADOUGOU

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4500

INFO AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN

AMEMBASSY PARIS

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE OUAGADOUGOU 2723

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, ECON, EAGR, UV

SUBJECT: FOOD CRISIS IN UPPER VOLTA

1. THE PROBLEM OF FOOD (GRAIN) SHORTAGES AND EXTREMELY HIGH FOOD PRICES HAS PROVOKED SOME UNUSUAL GOVERNMENT ACTIVITY. ON JULY 18, PRESIDENT LAMIZANA CALLED IN HIS CABINET FOR A SPECIAL MEETING SOLELY TO DISCUSS THE FOOD CRISIS. ON JULY 19, PRESIDENT LAMIZANA MET PUBLICLY WITH OUAGADOUGOU'S GRAIN MERCHANTS.

2. AT THE PUBLIC MEETING, PRESIDENT LAMIZANA SAID THAT BOTH THE SUPPLY AND PRICE PROBLEMS HAVE REACHED "A CRITICAL THRESHOLD" AND THAT "FAMINE IS PRESENT IN UPPER VOLTA." ON THE OTHER HAND, HE SAID THAT FOOD PRICES ARE LOWER IN UPPER VOLTA THAN IN ANY OTHER WEST AFRICAN COUNTRY.

3. STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND THE PRESIDENT OPENED AND CLOSED THE MEETING, BUT THE BULK OF THE TIME WAS GIVEN TO THE MERCHANTS TO DEFEND THEMSELVES AGAINST CHARGES AND TO EXPRESS THEIR OPINIONS.

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PAGE 02 OUAGAD 02723 210838Z

OUAGADOUGOU'S INDEPENDENT DAILY NEWSPAPER, L'OBSERVATEUR, HAS CRITICIZED THEM FOR EXACERBATING SHORTAGES BY EXPORTING GRAIN AND HOARDING SCARCE SUPPLIES. THE MERCHANTS DENIED THE CHARGES AND CRITICIZED THE MISMANAGEMENT AND THE FAILURES OF SEVERAL GOVERNMENT AGENCIES, PARTICULARLY THE REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATIONS AND NATIONAL

CEREALS OFFICE.

4. SOME PEOPLE ARE ARGUING FOR FORCEFUL ACTION AGAINST
HOARDERS, FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF STRICT LIMITATIONS
ON GRAIN USE FOR BEER MAKING, AND FOR LARGE GOVERNMENT
PURCHASES ON THE WORLD MARKET.

5. COMMENT: CONTRARY TO PRIOR EXPECTATIONS, THE PRESIDENT
TOOK A SOFT STAND AGAINST THE MERCHANTS AND MERELY URGED
THEM TO PUT THE PUBLIC INTEREST ABOVE THEIR PRIVATE
INTERESTS. EXCEPT FOR CALLING FOR INTERNATIONAL
ASSISTANCE, THE GOVERNMENT HAS TAKEN NO SPECIAL STEPS
THAT WOULD INCREASE GRAIN SUPPLIES, AND THE CRISIS
CONTINUES TO WORSEN. GRAHAM

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: FOOD SHORTAGE, FAMINE
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 21-Jul-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977OUAGAD02723
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770259-0448
Format: TEL
From: OUAGADOUGOU
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770733/aaaabcmu.tel
Line Count: 76
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 9ddfea65-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 03-Feb-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1790771
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: FOOD CRISIS IN UPPER VOLTA
TAGS: PINT, ECON, EAGR, SENV, UV
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/9ddfea65-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009